



## 7. Hostels Services

### WHAT IS THE SERVICE?

The provision of Emergency Hostel Services in a municipality supports efforts to:

- ▶ Ensure that individuals and families experiencing homelessness have access to temporary emergency shelter services that will help them stabilize their situations and move into appropriate accommodation in the community
- ▶ Provide safe and secure basic accommodations, and meals for individuals and/or families experiencing homelessness

Some municipalities view the services provided through emergency hostels/shelters as a key point of access to a broad range of social services, however it is well understood that emergency hostel services should not serve as permanent housing.

The provision of emergency hostel services by a municipality is not mandatory. Municipalities may choose to offer emergency shelter services directly or through third-party contracts with community-based agencies.

### WHAT ARE THE MAJOR SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES?

Issues facing the delivery of Emergency Hostel Services are:

- ▶ Identifying risk - the challenge of accurately identifying those individuals and families who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness in order to assess appropriate levels of service
- ▶ Broad accessibility - the availability of transitional and/or supported living/housing in the community along with supplementary support services may draw people to the community to use these shelters
- ▶ Differences in populations served – youth, single individuals, families and persons with disabilities impact the level and type of service required, as well as program costs
- ▶ Degree of Homelessness – tailoring responses to degrees of homelessness
  - ▶ ‘One-time homelessness’ - usually the result of an unexpected event
  - ▶ ‘Persistent homelessness’ - those caught in a pattern of cycling in and out of hospitals or correctional facilities in between living on the street or in emergency shelters

## WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

### What is the supply of beds available?

FIG. 7.1 Average Nightly Number of Emergency Shelter Beds Available per 100,000 Population

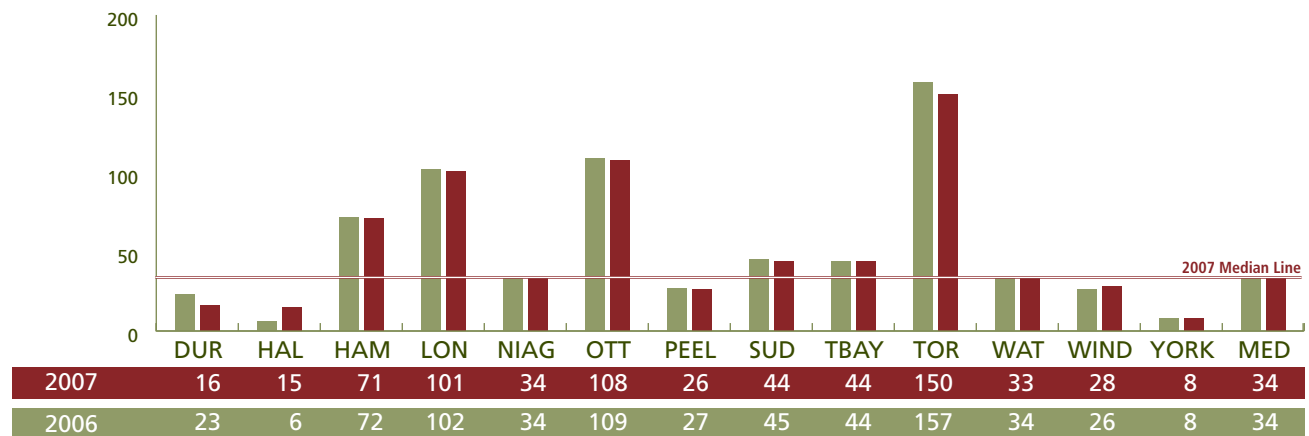


Figure 7.1 shows the average nightly number of emergency hostel beds available per 100,000 population. This chart should be viewed in relation to the demand for these beds shown in figure 7.3. While a municipality may provide fewer beds per capita this may be reflective of the demand.

### What is the demand for these beds?

FIG. 7.2 Average Nightly Bed Occupancy Rate of Emergency Shelters

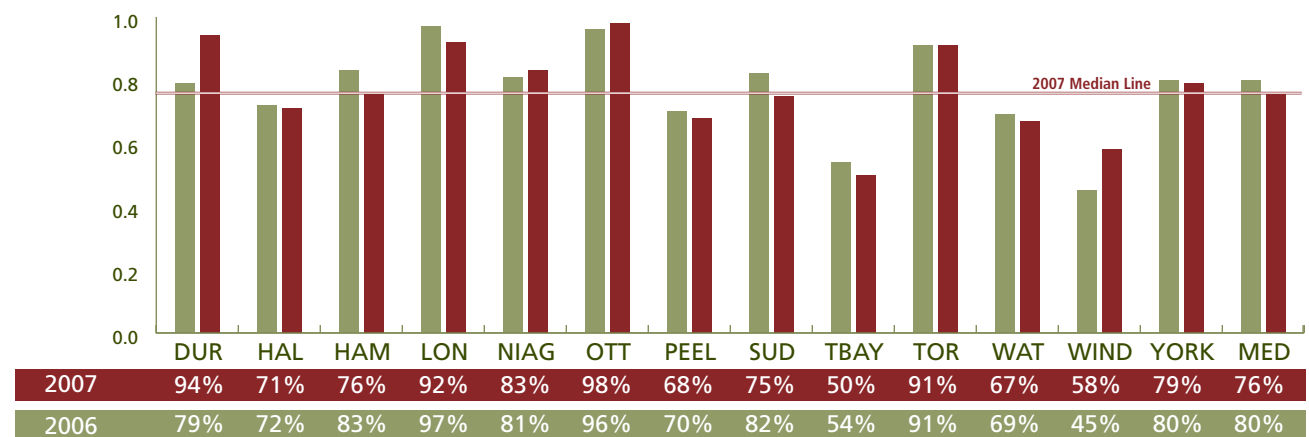


Figure 7.2 shows the average occupancy rate for emergency hostels over the course of a year. Occupancy declined in 2007 in eight of thirteen municipalities. Occupancy rates can be indicative of efficiencies in terms of how well services are utilized. However, occupancy rates are influenced significantly by social conditions and trends existing in the municipality.

### What is the average length of stay?

FIG. 7.3 Average Length of Stay per Admission to Emergency Shelters

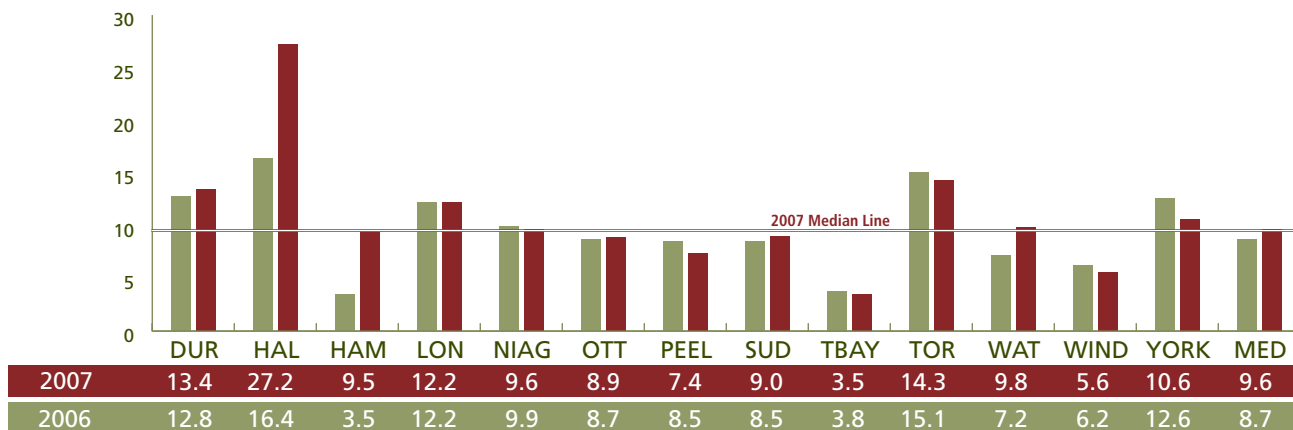


Figure 7.3 shows the average number of days that residents stayed in emergency shelters for each admission. A resident equals an adult or a child. In general, the length of stay is longer for families when compared to individuals.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU CONSIDER WHEN REVIEWING THESE RESULTS?

Each municipality’s results are influenced to varying degrees by a number of factors, including:

- ▶ Uncontrollable factors - many of the factors that influence demand and length of stay are beyond the control of emergency shelter operators e.g., natural disasters, weather-related events, communicable diseases, agency or funder policies, and community capacities for providing sufficient housing, income and support for residents who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- ▶ Municipal policies - average lengths of stay are shortened by municipal policies that limit funding to a set time period
- ▶ Supply of and demand for beds - number of emergency shelter beds available in a community may vary by season and by climate

For more information about the results, contact the Municipality’s representative listed in Appendix F, page 94.